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Home-Bound Russians Crowd Havana Dock

By Joe McGowan Jr.

HAVANA, Dec. 25 (AP) — While the American freighter Affrican Pilot was being prepared today to take on 1000 Florida-bound family members of the newly liberated Cuban invasion prisoners, hundreds of young Russian men, women and children were being taken in long truck and bus convoys to a nearby dock to board a Russian passenger liner.

She is the Admiral Najimov, the former German steamship Berlin.

The Russian vehicles blocked traffic along Havana's harborside highway on this sunny, humid Christmas Day.

The Russians rode silently through the streets, virtually ignored by Cubans out for an afternoon stroll.

Women rode on wooden seats in back of the Russian-built, heavy-duty trucks. Several held tiny children in their arms.

It was not known how many passengers were being taken aboard the 15,000-ton liner. She has been berthed in Havana for the last two weeks.

Premier Fidel Castro this morning went to the home of Berta Barreto de Los Heroes, which has served as headquarters for the Families Commi-

tee in the Cuban capital. Her son was one of the prisoners.

The street around the Barreto home was crowded with relatives seeking to join their exile kin in the United States. Some had come from outlying cities in the provinces.

One Cuban official told the Families Committee that those leaving the island would be permitted to take with them only the clothes they were wearing. Any family leaving Cuba forfeits all its possessions. But if one immediate family member remains this would not be the case, he said.

Cuban officials continued to treat the 46 visiting American seamen and the 6-man American Red Cross team as honored guests.

Buses took groups on tours of the Cuban capital. Transportation was made available for those wishing to attend Christmas.

A mixup in orders to Cuban guards at the dock last night resulted in crew members being restricted to the ship for several hours.

Capt. Alfred Boerum, shipmaster, was in the city working on plans for handling the

1000 passengers. When he returned to the ship and learned of the situation he quickly located a government official who lifted the restriction.

As the Americans toured the Havana streets they were asked repeatedly for U. S. cigarettes. In return, the Americans were enjoying the choice Cuban cigars no longer available in the United States.